

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 and 18-23 are currently pending in this application. Claim 17 was previously cancelled, without prejudice. Claims 1, 9-11, 12, 14, 16, and 18-19 have been amended. Claims 22 and 23 have been added. No new matter has been introduced, and entry of the amendments is respectfully requested.

At the outset, Applicants thank Examiners Tran and Christensen for the courtesy extended during an interview held on November 20, 2003. The arguments presented at the interview are included in the remarks which follow.

Claims 1 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,504,524 to Lu et al (“Lu”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, “An automatic exposure adjusting device, comprising. . . an analog to digital converter which produces a digital output comprising a plurality of bits, said digital output indicative of an output of each pixel of said image sensor.”

Lu fails to disclose all of the limitations of independent claim 1 and fails to anticipate the Applicants’ invention. Unlike the claimed invention, Lu discloses a set of comparators for performing an unconventional analog to digital conversion. (Col. 3, lines 59-64; Col. 6, line 58 thru Col. 7, line 4). As discussed in the interview, Examiners Tran and Christensen agreed that Lu discloses a set of comparators and OR gates for producing a one-bit relational signal. Lu does not disclose “an analog to digital converter which produces a digital output comprising a plurality of bits, said digital output indicative of an output of each pixel of said image sensor,” as recited by independent claim 1. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 11 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lu. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 11 depends directly from claim 1. As such, Lu does not teach or suggest each of the limitations recited by claim 11. For at least the reasons discussed above with regard to claim 1, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 2-9, 14-16, and 18-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lu in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,684,995 to Baumeister ("Baumeister"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As agreed during the interview, Lu and Baumeister are not properly combinable references. Lu specifically teaches away from the use of a conventional analog/digital converter, stating "there is no necessity for an analog-digital converter as is required in conventional image processing." (Col. 3, lines 58-61). Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine Lu with the teaching of Baumeister, which requires the use of a conventional analog/digital conversion.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgement that claim 12 contains allowable subject matter. For all of the reasons discussed above regarding independent claim 1, Applicants respectfully request allowance of this claim.

Applicants would like to again thank the Examiner and his Supervisory Examiner for meeting with our representatives on November 20, 2003. Examiners Tran and Christensen indicated that the foregoing amendments and arguments overcame the current rejections, at least with respect to independent claim 1.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

Dated: November 25, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

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